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# REVIEW

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CMAP GO TO 2040

- GO TO 2040  
A Pivotal Moment for Metropolitan Chicago
- 2011 Municipal Calendar



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# GO TO 2040

## A PIVOTAL MOMENT FOR METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

BY GERALD R. BENNETT, MAYOR, CITY OF PALOS HILLS, CHAIRMAN, CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING; AND RANDY BLANKENHORN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING

On October 13, 2010, leaders of metropolitan Chicago's seven counties voted unanimously to adopt GO TO 2040, the region's first comprehensive plan since Daniel Burnham's in 1909. Designed to guide development and investment decisions through mid-century and beyond, the plan's implementation will now be led by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which was formed for this purpose in 2005 at the urging of local elected officials and business leaders.

GO TO 2040 seeks to strategically align public policies and investments, maximizing the benefits of scarce resources as the region adds more than 2 million new residents by 2040. The plan, which is available at [www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040), reflects more than three years of research and careful deliberation by CMAP, its partners and stakeholders, including feedback from more than 35,000 residents.

The October 13 event to launch the plan's implementation phase attracted more than 1,000 attendees – despite inclement weather – to Chicago's Millennium Park. Distinguished speakers included Senator Richard J. Durbin, Mayor Richard M. Daley, Illinois Secretary of Transportation Gary Hannig, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Samuel Skinner, and experts on the GO TO 2040 issues that shape economic prosperity. On the day after, CMAP got some welcome news: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced a \$4.25 million Sustainable Communities Initiative grant for the agency and its partners to provide

technical assistance for communities seeking to implement GO TO 2040 strategies.

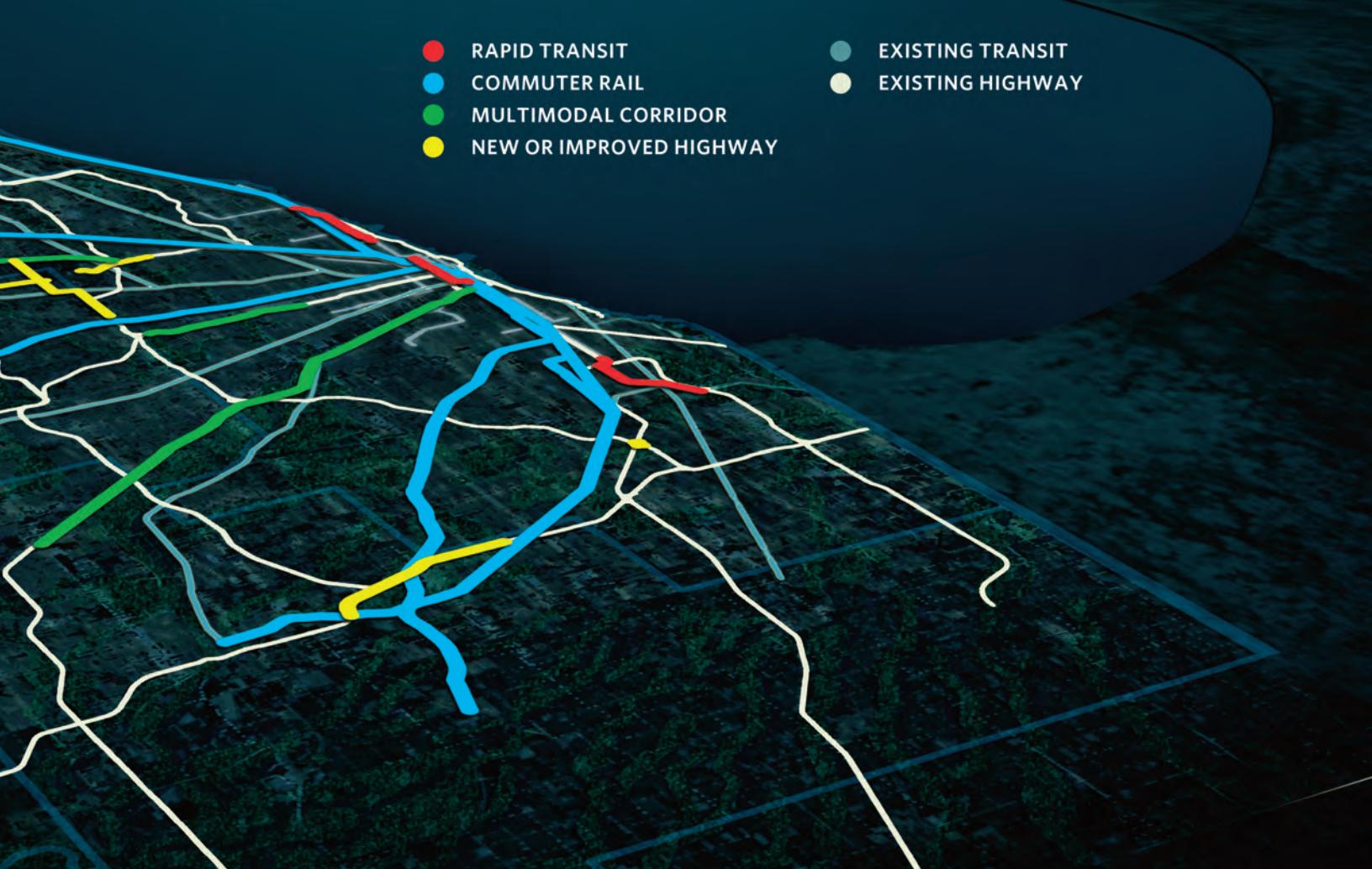
### WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR THE REGION

Metropolitan Chicago is one of the world's great economic centers. We have abundant natural resources – including a magnificent system of parks, open spaces, trails and waterways – with access to Lake Michigan for drinking water and recreation. We have a transportation system that moves people and goods, acting as an engine of jobs and prosperity. And the residents of the region themselves are perhaps our greatest renewable resource, constituting a diverse workforce that fuels economic development.

But we cannot take our quality of life for granted in the years to come. Stark new economic and environmental realities require the region and its communities to set priorities carefully.

Residents of the region's seven counties – Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will – aspire to and deserve a high quality of life. CMAP's mission is to help the counties and our 284 communities plan together for sustainable prosperity through mid-century and beyond.

Most of our region's near-term challenges are the direct result of choices made – or too often deferred – in the past. Urgent challenges have often been an excuse to avoid planning, but



they actually reinforce the need to plan more effectively. We need to act now, before today's opportunities become tomorrow's crises.

During decades of rapid but largely unplanned expansion, the region grew in patterns that were not sustainable:

- New homes cropped up in areas that were difficult to reach by automobile and virtually impossible by public transit.
- Jobs created were often far from the region's residential centers, keeping commuters tied up in traffic and wasting billions of dollars in lost time and fuel.
- Patterns of development consumed land at a rapid rate, with serious implications for natural resources – including less open space, potential water shortages and diminished air quality.

The GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan articulates carefully targeted policy reforms to enhance the region's economy by setting clear priorities, including improved efficiency of investments and transparency of public decision making. Within local control over zoning and land decisions, communities have many opportunities to work both together and independently toward the common goal of sustainable prosperity.

## WHAT'S IN THE PLAN

The GO TO 2040 plan is organized in four thematic chapters that include 12 high-priority recommendations. Each of these sections distills critically important strategies for achieving clear and measurable outcomes.

### LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Livable communities have a strength and vitality that attract people to them. Though opinions differ on what makes a community appealing, livable communities tend to share some common traits. They are healthy, safe and walkable. They offer choices for timely transportation to schools, jobs, services and basic needs. They are more cost-effective for individuals and local governments. And they make the region more economically competitive.

Whether we choose to live and work in a newer community or one that grew gradually for 100 years, a community's unique "sense of place" draws people and makes us feel at home or welcome there. Though that sense may seem intangible, livability is seldom an accident. Livable communities are created through effective planning and decisions by local officials, developers and individual residents.

The chapter on Livable Communities includes four recommendation areas:

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## GO TO 2040 CONTINUES

1. Achieve Greater Livability Through Land Use and Housing
2. Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources
3. Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space
4. Promote Sustainable Local Food



### HUMAN CAPITAL

The quality of our region's labor force is crucial for sustaining economic prosperity. Increasingly, job growth relies on the availability of skilled workers for knowledge-based industries.

The seven counties can gain a significant advantage by ensuring that businesses and residents here have the skills necessary to compete with other global economic centers.

The chapter on Human Capital includes two recommendation areas:

5. Improve Education and Workforce Development
6. Support Economic Innovation

### EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE

Now more than ever, taxpayers expect efficiency and transparency when governments invest their limited resources. To maximize the benefits that residents of our seven counties see from these public investments, government agencies across our region need to coordinate decisions strategically. Better access to information will help us reach these goals by putting essential data at the fingertips of not only our local decision makers but also the residents they serve.



The chapter on Efficient Governance includes three recommendation areas:

7. Reform State and Local Tax Policy
8. Improve Access to Information
9. Pursue Coordinated Investments

### REGIONAL MOBILITY

A modern transportation system is indispensable for our region's future prosperity. To sustain our economy and quality of life, residents must be able to travel quickly and easily around our region so they can choose from a wide variety of jobs and communities in which to live. Businesses must be able to count on the timely delivery of their goods.

Historically, our region's transportation system has been a foundation of our success. But the system's infrastructure was built decades ago, with inadequate ongoing investment to keep it up to date. While transportation is still a significant strength of this region, we must modernize our system to compete with other U.S. and global economic centers.

The chapter on Regional Mobility includes three recommendation areas:

10. Invest Strategically in Transportation
11. Increase Commitment to Public Transit
12. Create a More Efficient Freight Network

### WHAT'S NEXT: MOVING FORWARD

CMAP will aggressively lead the implementation of GO TO 2040, which takes a forceful but nuanced approach to aligning the region's public policies and investments to achieve sustainable prosperity. In addition to the four central themes and 12 recommendation areas, the plan also includes sections that describe challenges and opportunities, along with best practices for implementing GO TO 2040 recommendations in various contexts – from federal reforms to actions by local governments, businesses and even individual residents. Now is the time for all stakeholders of the seven-county region to emphasize our common interests and look beyond our short-term concerns to strive toward the long-term vision articulated in the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan.

